



SEQUOIA & KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST/GIANT SEQUOIA NATIONAL MONUMENT

WINTER GUIDE 2004-2005



CONTENTS:

Bear Area: Store Your Food • page 10

Camping & Lodging • pages 10 -11

Activities Overview • page 3

Highlights: Trees, Trails & Features • pages 6 -7

Map of Roads & Facilities • page 12

Safety: Your Responsibility • page 5

Snowplay, Services & Facilities • pages 8 -9

Roads: Closures, Rules, Gasoline • page 5



Winter fun in “summer” parks

National parks are often dubbed "winter" or "summer" parks, depending on their busy season. Death Valley, for example, or Florida's Everglades, get most of their visitors in the cooler season, making them "winter" parks. Acadia and Glacier, on the other hand, are easiest to visit — and therefore busiest — in summer.

Most people see the cold, snowy countenance of the Sierra Nevada and treat Sequoia and Kings Canyon as summer parks. That's when roads and trails are clear, the weather is mild, and most people come to these mountains. But if you're here now, you've figured out the secret: winter offers some of the greatest beauty, mystery, tranquility, challenge, and just plain fun in these parks.

It's not always easy to enjoy the parks in winter: You may well need to “chain up.” In fact, if you are in the park now and want to see sequoias but don't have tire chains, you should think again. The suddenness and unpredictability of Sierran weather as well as genuine concern for your safety make the rangers err on the side of caution when deciding to require chains. But if you've got chains, layers of warm clothes, and you're willing to take the roads very slowly, then the beauty and fun of winter await you!

If it's social fun you want, head to one of the bustling snowplay areas (see pages 8 and 9). Didn't bring a sled? They're available for sale at Grant Grove and Wuksachi Village.

Take your fun seriously, though, and play safe. People get hurt snowplaying every year when they let things get out of control. Some



♦ For some, Sierran snows are the first of their lives! Puerto Rican Tania Metz, a Student Conservation Assistant, said, “I feel like I'm in a store window that's been decorated for winter!”

of the injuries are devastating; don't let it happen to you! When the hills get extremely icy, rangers close all or part of the snowplay areas, but only *you* can prevent accidents.

Want to be active but not in a crowd? Snowshoeing or cross-country skiing into the wintry heart of a sequoia grove is like nothing else you've ever tried. Whether you find misty fog or bright sunshine, the peace and clean, clear beauty will refresh your spirit while your legs get pleasantly tired! Be safe here, too. Take a map. Tell someone where you are going. Learn how to spot and follow the ski-trail signs on the trees, and get back before winter's early sunset.

Step into a visitor center for information on these wonderful parks and how to enjoy them safely. It's a great way to make sure you have what you need for your particular winter adventure, or to warm up after a romp in the snow. Check out the exhibits to learn more about this place. When you head outside again, you'll know and appreciate the natural scene around you even more.

If you've had enough of cold, the snow-free foothills are in their glory now. Green grass coats the hills that were bone dry just a few months ago. Flowers pop up by late January. Birds not seen here in summer flash through oak and chaparral. Slanted and soft, winter sunlight highlights the landscape's details. Take advantage of the lower elevation trails now; they'll be very hot by summer!

We're glad that you didn't let the “summer park” label keep you away this winter. Just remain flexible and let the weather call the shots. Safe travels leave you with the best memories of winter fun.